

## MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL MSME PRODUCTS THROUGH THE UTILIZATION OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS IN THE NEW NORMAL ERA

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to investigate the marketing strategy of local MSME products through the utilization of digital platforms in the new normal era. In the midst of new normal conditions marked by changes in consumer behavior and limited physical interaction, the use of digital platforms is crucial for the survival of MSME businesses. This study uses the literature review method by finding references in accordance with the research context. The results of the research findings show that MSMEs that implement digital marketing strategies effectively usually integrate several platforms such as social media, online marketplaces, and personal websites. Creative and personalized content, the use of SEO, and data analytics prove to be important in increasing interaction and sales. On the other hand, factors such as limited digital knowledge, financial capacity for initial investment, and cybersecurity are major barriers. The study also showed a significant increase in sales and market expansion for MSMEs that managed to overcome these barriers and implement digital strategies well.

**Keywords:** Marketing Strategy, Local MSME Products, Digital Platform Utilization, New Normal Era.

### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic has driven the acceleration of digital transformation in various sectors, including the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector. Significant changes have occurred in consumer behavior, where there is an increasing tendency to shop online and use digital platforms for various daily activities (Widyasari et al., 2024). This creates both opportunities and challenges for local MSMEs to survive and thrive in the new normal era, which is characterized by various physical restrictions and changes in consumer behavior (Mawardi et al., 2024).

The adaptation of MSMEs in the new normal era is important because it determines business continuity amid changes in consumer behavior and uncertain economic conditions. The acceleration of digital transformation and the shift towards online transactions force MSMEs to adapt their operations, both in terms of marketing, distribution, and customer service, in order to survive and remain relevant in the market (Yong, 2023). Without the ability to adapt quickly, MSMEs

risk falling behind and losing their market share to competitors who are faster to innovate and utilize digital technology. Therefore, adaptation is no longer an option, but rather an urgent need for MSMEs to ensure their business continuity in this new normal era (Setyawati et al., 2023).

The ability to adapt to these changes is critical to the survival of MSMEs, thus the use of digital platforms has increased significantly in response to physical restrictions and the need for easier and more secure access for various purposes (Kumar et al., 2023). In the context of businesses, especially MSMEs, digital platforms have become a very important tool to maintain operations, access markets, and meet customer expectations that are shifting to online purchasing. E-commerce, social media, and instant messaging apps continue to grow as the main channels for transactions and promotions, while virtual conferencing platforms are becoming the new platform for MSMEs to interact with customers and business partners. These trends indicate a permanent shift in the way MSMEs operate and communicate with their customers (Fridayani & Chiang, 2023).

Furthermore, the increased use of digital platforms also correlates with increased digital literacy among MSME players and the growth of technological infrastructure. More sophisticated analytics and digital marketing tools are now affordable and can be leveraged by MSMEs to improve their understanding of customer data and personalize offerings (Hidayat et al., 2023). On the other hand, the government and various MSME support agencies are working to provide support through digital training and consultancy to maximize MSMEs' adaptability to this new norm. Thus, the growing use of digital platforms not only reflects a response to the pandemic crisis but is also a strategic foundation for the long-term development and growth of MSMEs in the digital era (Candra et al., 2023).

Digital platforms offer new opportunities to expand markets, reach new customers, and enhance more efficient business operations. However, many local MSMEs experience difficulties in optimally utilizing these digital platforms. Various factors become obstacles, such as limited digital knowledge, access to technology, and infrastructure unpreparedness (Kurniawan & Lubis, 2024).

An effective marketing strategy that is integrated with digital platforms is one of the important keys for MSMEs to compete in this increasingly tight market. Therefore, it is important to conduct a study on the marketing strategy of local MSME products through the use of digital platforms, to identify the best approaches, overcome existing challenges, and take advantage of the opportunities available in the new normal era (Putri et al., 2023).

By understanding the current market dynamics and integrating digital technology into marketing strategies, local MSMEs can adapt quickly, maintain

their business operations, and even gain a competitive advantage in this new era. The importance of this research is not only to help MSMEs respond to challenges and capitalize on opportunities, but also to provide insights to the government and policy makers on how to support MSMEs in their digital transformation.

## **Research Methods**

The research method conducted in this study uses literature. The literature research method is one approach in research that relies on written sources and publications as primary data. This method allows researchers to find research references from various trusted sources, such as journals, books, articles, and other publications relevant to the research topic (Cerra et al., 2023). There are several techniques that can be done in the literature research method, one of which is searching for relevant keywords in catalogs, indexes, and search engines to find related literature (Ozili et al., 2023).

This literature research process involves not only data collection but also critical analysis of the information found. The goal is to identify, compile, and analyze various data found in order to produce a conclusion or deeper understanding related to the research problem (Deutscher & Mazumder, 2023). Literature study research can use analytical descriptive methods, where researchers concentrate on collecting and processing literature data to respond to research questions (Rosalin & Rachman, 2023).

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Effective Marketing Strategies for MSMEs**

MSME is an acronym for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, which are an important segment in the economies of most countries, including Indonesia. Microenterprises are defined as productive economic businesses run by individuals and/or individual business entities with certain relatively small assets and turnover (Setyawati et al., 2023). Small enterprises usually involve several workers, have larger assets and turnover than micro enterprises, but are still on a limited scale. Meanwhile, medium-sized enterprises have larger assets and turnover, and can employ more employees. The exact definition for the classification of MSMEs may vary depending on local government regulations which usually set asset and turnover limits for each category (Kumar et al., 2023).

Characteristics of MSMEs include flexibility and the ability to adapt to a fast-changing market environment. This is due to flat organizational structures and decision-making processes that are usually simpler than those of large enterprises.

MSMEs are also often strongly linked to local communities, both in terms of providing jobs and contributing to the local economy (Fridayani & Chiang, 2023). In addition, MSMEs can be closer to their customers, allowing for more personalized service delivery and quicker responsive product or service customization. However, MSMEs also often face challenges in terms of access to capital, technology, and broader markets, which can be a barrier to growth if not managed properly (Hidayat et al., 2023).

An effective marketing strategy for MSMEs requires a precise and scalable approach that adapts to limited resources but increases visibility and sales. First, clearly identifying the target market is a crucial first step. MSMEs need to understand specifically who their ideal consumers are, what their needs and wants are, and what their purchasing behavior is (Candra et al., 2023). This data and analysis allows MSME owners to design product or service offerings that closely match market expectations. Furthermore, digital marketing is key, utilizing social media, SEO (Search Engine Optimization), and email marketing can be a cost-effective way to reach the target market. Social media, with its growing number of users, offers a platform to build brand presence and interact directly with consumers in real-time (Kurniawan & Lubis, 2024).

Furthermore, product innovation and differentiation can be a highly effective marketing strategy for MSMEs. Developing products or services that are unique and difficult for competitors to replicate can create significant added value in the eyes of consumers. This can be in the form of superior product quality, innovative design, or even exceptional customer experience (Putri et al., 2023). In addition, collaboration or partnership with other compatible businesses can help in expanding market reach and accessing new consumer segments. In line with this, it is important for MSMEs to continuously apply feedback from customers as a basis for periodic refinement of products and marketing strategies. Thus, MSMEs can maintain relevance and competitiveness in a dynamic and competitive market (Agarwal et al., 2023).

### **Integration of MSMEs with Digital Platforms**

Social media has become one of the most effective digital marketing tools, allowing businesses of all sizes to interact directly with their consumers. Various platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, each offer unique characteristics that brands can utilize to communicate their messages (Wijaya et al., 2023). For example, Instagram is particularly effective for brands that rely on strong

visuals, while LinkedIn is more suitable for B2B (business-to-business) with more professional content. The existence of features such as targeted advertising, interactive posts, and analytics, allows MSMEs to reach the right audience at a relatively affordable cost, while gaining direct insight from user interactions (Rosli et al., 2023).

### **E-commerce**

E-commerce platforms offer an open space for MSMEs to sell their products or services online without having to have a physical store. Large marketplaces such as Amazon, Alibaba, and in Indonesia such as Tokopedia and Shopee, provide infrastructure that connects sellers with millions of buyers, facilitating all processes from product listing, payment, to logistics (Kurniawan & Lubis, 2024). The main advantages of e-commerce are ease of access and a very wide market reach. MSMEs can reach customers around the world, 24/7, with stock management and operations simplified through the platform. In addition, feedback and rating systems in e-commerce help build consumer trust in new brands (Putri et al., 2023).

### **Website**

Website development is another important step in a digital marketing strategy. A website serves as a digital 'home' for a business, providing an official platform where consumers can obtain information, explore products, or even make direct purchases. With a website, MSMEs have full control over their brand image, content, and user interaction with their brand. A responsive and easy-to-navigate website increases the credibility and professionalism of the business in the eyes of consumers. In addition, by implementing good SEO (Search Engine Optimization) practices, MSME websites can appear in the top search results on search engines such as Google, helping to attract relevant organic traffic and high conversion potential (Amri et al., 2023).

To make the most of the power of each platform, MSMEs should develop an integrated digital marketing strategy that focuses on content creation, SEO optimization, and data analysis.

### **Platform Integration**

Integration between digital platforms is an important aspect. For example, MSMEs can integrate social media content with their website, directing traffic from social media to product pages on the website to increase sales conversions. This

integration can also include using e-commerce as a means of sales and social media as a tool for promotion and direct communication with consumers. By making this connection, MSMEs can foster closer relationships with customers and create a more seamless shopping experience (Widyasari et al., 2024).

### **Data Analysis and Success Measurement**

Using analytics is key to understanding the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies. Whether through Google Analytics for websites or analytics provided by social media and e-commerce platforms, MSMEs can collect data on visitors, browsing behavior, conversion rates, and more (Lubis et al., 2024). This analysis helps in identifying what is working and what needs to be improved. For example, data can show the type of content that attracts the most attention or the products that are most frequently viewed or purchased, allowing for adjustments to strategies to increase their effectiveness (Amri et al., 2023).

### **SEO Implementation**

Learning and implementing SEO techniques for both website content and product descriptions in e-commerce is vital for long-term visibility. This optimization includes using relevant keywords, ensuring fast website loading speed, implementing link building strategies, and providing quality and informative content. With SEO, MSMEs can improve their search rankings, which in turn can increase brand awareness and purchase volume (Musa et al., 2023).

Running effective digital marketing is not just a matter of using the best platforms, but also conducting continuous evaluation and adjusting strategies to maximize ROI (Return on Investment). With the right approach, MSMEs can utilize digital platforms to not only survive but thrive in a competitive market (Luhukay, 2023).

### **Pros and cons of each platform**

The main advantage of social media in marketing is its ability to generate high interaction and engagement from users. Platforms such as Instagram and Facebook offer tools for creating visual and engaging content, such as videos and images, that can quickly capture the attention of an audience. These interactions not only expand organic reach but also provide immediate and valuable feedback from consumers that can be used to improve products or services. Then, the targeted

advertising feature allows businesses to reach specific customer segments with precision, maximizing the efficiency of advertising spending (Rini et al., 2023).

However, social media also has disadvantages. Frequent and sudden algorithm changes can make previously effective marketing strategies irrelevant in a short period of time, forcing MSMEs to regularly update their approach. In addition, having a presence on social media requires maintaining and updating consistent, high-quality content, which may require resources and time. Reliance on these platforms is also risky in the event of technical issues or if the platforms experience a decline in popularity (Setyawati et al., 2023).

### **Pros and Cons of E-commerce**

The advantages of e-commerce platforms mainly lie in their ability to provide a broad market for MSMEs. Without being tied to a specific geographical location, products or services can be accessed by customers all over the world. Large marketplaces also offer various supporting infrastructures such as payment options, purchase management, and logistics, which can reduce the operational burden for MSMEs. This makes the entry barrier to starting a business lower and more accessible for many (Amang et al., 2023).

On the other hand, competition in e-commerce is fierce due to the large number and variety of vendors. Difficulty in product prominence is a significant challenge, and advertising costs on these platforms can increase rapidly to remain competitive. Platform reliability is also an important issue, especially regarding data and transaction security. In addition, MSMEs may have difficulty building customer trust and loyalty without the direct and personalized interaction that is more easily arranged through physical stores or direct sales (Basalamah et al., 2023).

Through the evaluation of these advantages and disadvantages, MSMEs can determine which platform is most effective for their marketing strategy based on their needs and resources.

### **Business Adaptation Strategy in the New Normal Era**

Product innovation is key to staying relevant and competitive in a fast-changing market. MSMEs can adopt a customer-centric approach to product development, involving customers directly in the design process through feedback and surveys (Basalamah et al., 2023). Technologies such as 3D printing and rapid prototyping enable faster testing and iteration of new products at a lower cost, thus accelerating the development cycle. In addition, using environmentally friendly

raw materials or adopting sustainable practices can also be part of product innovation, not only creating added value for consumers but also highlighting the brand amidst market trends that increasingly prioritize sustainability (Hadi & Pratminingsih, 2023).

In terms of marketing, integrating the latest digital technologies can provide a significant competitive advantage. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) for big data analysis can help MSMEs recognize patterns of consumer behavior and product preferences, which can be leveraged for marketing personalization (Utami et al., 2023). For example, AI can be used to automate personalized product recommendations in e-commerce based on customers' purchase and browsing history. In addition, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies offer innovative ways to experience products, allowing customers to virtually 'try on' products before buying. The application of these technologies not only enhances customer experience but also appeals to the tech-savvy younger generation, allowing MSMEs to reach a wider and more diverse audience (Natalina & Mutafarida, 2023).

Collaboration with digital platforms is a crucial strategy for MSMEs in expanding their reach and improving operational efficiency. Platforms such as online marketplaces, social media, and delivery applications can be important partners that facilitate various aspects of the business from marketing to product distribution. For example, MSMEs can work with e-commerce platforms to utilize their well-structured logistics and distribution networks. This not only reduces the logistics burden for MSMEs but also speeds up delivery time to customers, increasing consumer satisfaction (Putri et al., 2023). In addition, platforms such as Instagram and Facebook provide sophisticated digital marketing tools, such as targeted advertising and analytics, which can assist MSMEs in identifying and targeting their potential customers more effectively (Dewi et al., 2023).

The synergy between MSMEs and digital platforms also creates opportunities for innovation and unique product offerings through data integration and consumer behavior analysis. By accessing big data from these platforms, MSMEs can more accurately analyze market trends and consumer preferences, allowing them to adapt or develop products and services that better suit market needs (Yulianti et al., 2023). For example, collaboration with food delivery apps can help small restaurants customize their menus based on feedback and sales data received through these platforms. In the long run, such collaboration not only increases visibility and sales but also encourages continuous innovation based on



real data and customer interactions, thus helping MSMEs survive and thrive in a dynamic business ecosystem (Kawane et al., 2024).

Furthermore, to enhance collaboration and synergy and maximize the benefits of digital platforms, MSMEs need to evaluate and select the platform that best suits their business needs and objectives. This includes considering factors such as cost, demographics of platform users, and features offered (Putra & Sajida, 2023). In addition, it is important for MSMEs to stay updated with technological developments and trends in digital marketing in order to continuously adapt and utilize new tools that emerge. Organizing regular training and workshops for employees on the use of the latest digital technologies can also help ensure that the team can manage and utilize digital platforms efficiently (Yulianti et al., 2023).

In conclusion, collaboration and synergy with digital platforms provide important opportunities for MSMEs to expand market reach, improve operational efficiency, and increase customer satisfaction. By utilizing data obtained from these platforms, MSMEs can better understand customer needs and more quickly adapt to market changes. Therefore, building effective cooperation with digital platforms and continuously developing technological capacity are important strategies for business growth and sustainability in this digital era.

### **Challenges faced by MSMEs in utilizing digital platforms**

One of the main challenges faced by MSMEs in utilizing digital platforms is limited resources and knowledge of new digital technologies. MSMEs often have limited budgets for technology investments and do not always have access to a workforce with sufficient digital expertise (Yadav et al., 2023). This can result in difficulties in selecting the most suitable digital tools for their business needs and in effectively implementing digital strategies. In addition, lack of experience in big and complex data analysis limits their ability to properly understand consumer behavior, which is crucial in the development of effective products and marketing strategies (Alfaisal et al., 2024).

Another challenge relates to the increasing competition on digital platforms. With more and more businesses going digital, the competition for attention and interaction from consumers is becoming fierce. MSMEs often have to compete with larger companies that have bigger marketing budgets and greater access to advanced technology (PRIYA, 2023). This makes it difficult for MSMEs to stand out among the competition without a robust and creative digital marketing strategy. In addition, algorithm changes on social media platforms and marketplaces can hurt

MSMEs that cannot quickly adapt, reducing their visibility and affecting revenue (Putri et al., 2023).

In addition, cybersecurity challenges are also an issue that cannot be ignored. MSMEs may not have sufficient infrastructure or knowledge to secure their company and customer data (Ichsan & Zaenuri, 2023). This increases the risk from cyberattacks, such as malware, phishing, and ransomware, which can cause great damage to a business's reputation and finances. Faced with these threats, MSMEs should prioritize cybersecurity and may need to invest in security software, employee training, and strong privacy policies to protect their digital assets (Sugiana et al., 2023).

In addition, regulations relating to e-commerce and data privacy are getting stricter in many countries, giving MSMEs additional challenges to ensure compliance and manage the legal aspects of their online operations. Keeping up with the ever-changing and often complex rules can be a significant administrative burden for already overworked MSME owners (Rosalin & Rachman, 2023).

In conclusion, while the use of digital platforms offers various opportunities for MSMEs, there are some significant challenges that need to be overcome. From limited resources, fierce competition, cybersecurity issues, to complex regulations—all of these require special attention and appropriate strategies. MSMEs need to educate themselves on best practices related to the use of digital platforms, invest in cybersecurity tools and training, and ensure they stay up to date with applicable regulations to manage their digital business safely and effectively. By doing so, they can utilize digital platforms to support their business growth and sustainability in the long run.

## **Conclusion**

In the new normal era, market structure and consumer behavior have shifted significantly, encouraging local MSMEs to adopt marketing strategies through intensive use of digital platforms. The study found that the use of social media, online marketplaces, and websites is key to increasing the visibility and market reach of MSMEs during the pandemic. Strategies such as engaging and relevant content marketing, SEO (Search Engine Optimization) to improve search rankings, and the use of analytics features to understand consumer behavior, have proven effective in increasing engagement and conversions. In addition, adapting to digital payments and efficient logistics systems are important factors in providing a satisfying shopping experience for consumers.

The utilization of digital technology not only has an impact on improving sales performance, but also opens up opportunities to expand business networks. MSMEs that successfully digitize their operations and marketing show better resilience and growth than those that do not. This confirms the importance of adapting to digital technology as a means to not only survive but also thrive in changing market conditions.

The implication for MSME stakeholders, including policymakers, business associations, and MSME support institutions, is the need to provide MSMEs with resources, training, and access to technology to maximize their utilization. Improving digital literacy, subsidizing or providing financial support for technology investment, and building a digital ecosystem that supports linkages between MSMEs and digital logistics and payment service providers are important steps to take. By doing so, MSMEs can increase their competitiveness in the global market and support national economic recovery post-pandemic.

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